

# WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

OCTOBER 2002



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development

## Unemployment rates decline in all northwest counties

Unemployment rates in all but three counties in the state declined in September. That included all ten counties in Northwest Wisconsin. The Northwest Wisconsin unemployment rate in September dropped to 4.0 percent from 4.6 percent in August. The current rate, however, remains higher than one year ago.

Seven of the ten northwest counties reported an unemployment rate lower than the state unadjusted rate of 4.3 percent. Seasonally adjusted the State of Wisconsin unemployment rate declined from 5.2 percent in August to 5.1 percent in September while the national rate dropped from 5.7 to 5.6 percent. Seasonally adjusting the labor force estimates is an attempt to remove swings in employment and unemployment caused by seasonal changes in the labor market. County labor force estimates are not seasonally adjusted.

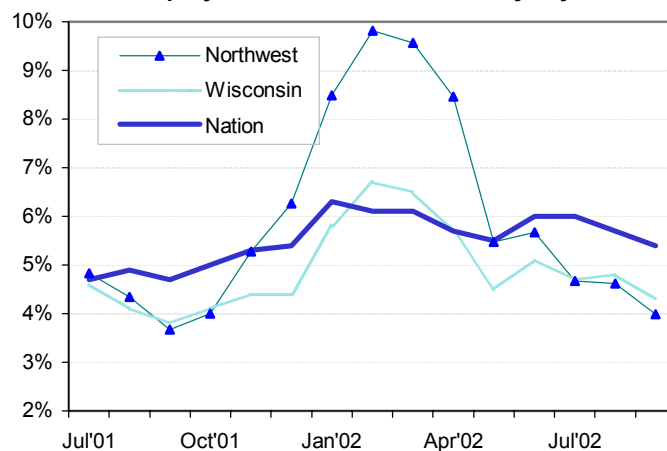
However, the labor force in the counties of Northwest Wisconsin typically loses participants in September as summer workers are no longer needed and students return to school. The number of employed in the region declined by 1,500 from August to September. The greatest employment reductions occurred in counties where tourism plays a significant role in the local economy. Even though there were fewer seasonal jobs in September many of the workers who left those jobs did not remain in the labor force and were not counted as unemployed. That's why there is no increase in unemployment in September.

In fact the number of unemployed declines in September as workers laid off from school-related jobs

return to work. That includes the bus drivers, kitchen workers, janitors and teacher aides that are not under twelve-month contracts with school districts (local government). This September, however, the increase in government employment was very weak and that came on the heels of a below normal increase in August.

The result of a smaller labor force from seasonal employment reductions and fewer unemployed as workers returned to jobs was a lower unemployment rate for the region and every county in the region. Since the trends that generated the lower rate occur every September it was no surprise that unemployment rates declined and could be the lowest this year.

Unemployment Rates-Not seasonally adjusted



	Jul'01	Aug'01	Sep'01	Jul'02	Aug'02	Sep'02
Northwest	4.8%	4.3%	3.7%	4.7%	4.6%	4.0%
Wisconsin	4.6%	4.1%	3.8%	4.7%	4.8%	4.3%
Nation	4.7%	4.9%	4.7%	6.0%	5.7%	5.4%

The number of unemployed this September is still higher than one year ago, however. Workers laid off from jobs in other sectors remain unemployed. That is especially true in manufacturing. There is no change in the regional estimate of manufacturing jobs from last September but several counties did lose production jobs. In Ashland County there are roughly 100 fewer production jobs, in Douglas County the estimate is down 70 and in

Washburn County there are 50 less. This is one reason why the Ashland unemployment rate of 5.9 percent is the highest in the region.

Workers in Douglas and Washburn counties have employment options in surrounding communities that help keep unemployment in check. The September unemployment rate in Douglas County was 3.8 percent and in Washburn County it was 4.0 percent.

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The lowest unemployment rate in the region of 3.2 percent was in Taylor County where there were 140 more manufacturing jobs this September compared with one year ago. The second lowest rate in the region, and 60<sup>th</sup> lowest in the state, of 3.4 percent was in Sawyer County. The unemployment rate in Bayfield County was 3.6 percent and in Burnett County it was

3.7 percent. The Price County unemployment rate was 4.0 percent, the rate in Rusk County was 4.9 percent and in Iron County the rate was 5.1 percent. The number of residents filing claims for unemployment compensation declined in all but Rusk County in September.

#### September 2002 Estimates

Not seasonally adjusted	Wisconsin	Ashland	Bayfield	Burnett	Douglas	Iron	Price	Rusk	Sawyer	Taylor	Washburn
<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	3,050,200	8,210	7,670	7,260	23,140	3,420	6,810	7,130	10,490	10,970	8,070
Employed	2,919,600	7,730	7,390	6,990	22,270	3,250	6,540	6,780	10,140	10,620	7,750
Unemployed	130,600	480	280	270	870	170	270	350	350	350	320
Unemployment rate(%)	4.3%	5.9%	3.6%	3.7%	3.8%	5.1%	4.0%	4.9%	3.4%	3.2%	4.0%
<b>Total jobs, all industries**</b>	2,856,120	8,840	4,310	4,790	19,680	2,470	6,450	6,050	7,580	9,380	6,200
Construction & Mining	135,740	370	290	290	1,200	380	240	230	430	470	300
Manufacturing	572,180	1,650	210	1,050	1,200	490	2,530	2,300	790	3,250	1,150
Transportation & Pbl.Util.	133,190	230	260	150	2,720	70	120	210	190	570	250
Wholesale Trade	137,200	160	40	30	1,260	60	130	140	130	490	170
Retail Trade	508,710	1,630	830	1,050	4,000	580	1,030	760	1,990	1,490	1,410
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	153,640	350	140	180	500	40	220	130	310	380	210
Services	809,380	2,580	1,020	800	5,490	480	1,190	930	1,860	1,660	1,430
Government	406,070	1,870	1,520	1,250	3,310	390	990	1,350	1,880	1,070	1,280

#### Change from previous month

<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	-41,100	-390	-310	-200	-140	-100	-90	-10	-600	0	-330
Employed	-24,500	-260	-250	-150	60	-80	-50	0	-540	60	-260
Unemployed	-16,600	-130	-60	-50	-200	-20	-50	0	-60	-60	-60
Unemployment rate(%)	-0.5%	-1.2%	-0.6%	-0.5%	-0.8%	-0.4%	-0.6%	-0.1%	-0.3%	-0.5%	-0.6%
<b>Total jobs, all industries**</b>	3,620	-110	-180	-60	660	-20	0	-10	-290	40	-170
Construction & Mining	-3,200	-20	-10	-10	10	-20	0	-10	-30	-20	-10
Manufacturing	-5,120	-30	0	0	0	-10	-30	-20	0	-60	-30
Transportation & Pbl.Util.	3,390	30	-10	0	10	20	0	0	40	20	30
Wholesale Trade	-1,180	-10	10	0	20	0	-10	0	-10	10	0
Retail Trade	-6,230	-70	-80	-60	20	-20	-30	0	-110	-10	-70
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	-1,110	0	-10	-10	-10	0	-10	0	-10	-10	0
Services	-3,960	10	-150	-20	-100	-10	-50	20	-110	-10	-160
Government	21,030	-10	70	40	700	10	110	0	-80	110	80

#### Change from one year ago

<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	69,300	310	190	-240	480	20	60	90	570	460	30
Employed	51,100	170	160	-190	450	-20	60	50	510	390	20
Unemployed	18,200	140	30	-50	30	40	0	40	60	70	10
Unemployment rate(%)	0.5%	1.6%	0.4%	-0.5%	0.1%	1.1%	0.0%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%	0.1%
<b>Total jobs, all industries**</b>	15,130	-70	180	-200	940	-50	-20	-10	470	300	-70
Construction & Mining	2,790	-20	20	20	90	30	20	10	30	-20	20
Manufacturing	-12,850	-110	0	30	-70	10	30	10	10	140	-50
Transportation & Pbl.Util.	-1,200	-60	10	0	230	0	-10	-10	10	40	-10
Wholesale Trade	-310	-10	-10	0	50	0	-10	10	0	30	20
Retail Trade	2,310	-30	0	20	130	10	10	10	210	0	10
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	2,840	10	-10	-10	0	0	0	0	10	20	-10
Services	27,120	-100	10	-90	440	-10	-20	10	220	70	-10
Government	-5,580	240	140	-150	70	-70	-40	-50	-10	20	-60

\* Includes participants residing in area. \*\* Includes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Totals may not add due to rounding. Calculations based on unrounded numbers.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: [WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI](http://WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI)

Direct questions and comments to: **Beverly Gehrke, Labor Market Analyst**

Hayward Job Center, 15618 Wind Rose Lane, Suite 108, Hayward, Wisconsin 54843

715-634-5289 715-634-6094(FAX) e-mail: [Beverly.Gehrke@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:Beverly.Gehrke@dwd.state.wi.us)